



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# The Endangered Species Program in New Jersey

*Conserving the Ecosystems Upon Which They Depend*

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Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

Gene Nieminen/USFWS

## *Endangered Species Act: A Brief Overview*

Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973. The ESA, the most comprehensive law ever enacted by a Nation for the preservation of endangered species, states that endangered and threatened animals and plants "are of aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people."

## *How Does the Endangered Species Act Work in New Jersey?*

Simply stated, the ESA works in New Jersey through local actions to protect and restore one of the State's most precious resources: its native wildlife and plants. Endangered species biologists in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (Service) New Jersey Field Office protect and restore populations of species included on the Federal List of Endangered

and Threatened Wildlife and Plants and their habitats by: monitoring species that are candidates for listing; implementing protection strategies for candidate species (which in some cases may avoid the need for listing); listing species in need of protection; working to recover and restore listed species; and consulting with other federal agencies regarding activities that may affect listed species. In addition, the New Jersey Field Office serves as a contact point to distribute information about the ESA and federally listed species in New Jersey.

## *Federally listed species in New Jersey*

**Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)  
**Piping Plover** (*Charadrius melodus*)  
**Bog Turtle** (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*)  
**Indiana Bat** (*Myotis sodalis*)  
**Dwarf Wedgemussel** (*Alasmidonta heterodon*)  
**Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle** (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*)  
**Small Whorled Pogonia** (*Isotria medeoloides*)  
**Swamp Pink** (*Helonias bullata*)  
**Knieskern's Beaked-Rush** (*Rhynchospora knieskernii*)  
**American Chaffseed** (*Schwalbea americana*)  
**Sensitive Joint-Vetch** (*Aeschynomene virginica*)  
**Seabeach Amaranth** (*Amaranthus pumilus*)

## *Candidate species in New Jersey*

**Bog Asphodel** (*Narthecium americanum*)  
**Hirsts' Panic Grass** (*Panicum hirstii*)

New Jersey, while one of the Nation's most densely populated States, provides habitat for 12 federally listed species and 2 candidate species. New Jersey is especially important for the conservation of bog asphodel and Knieskern's beaked-rush, species no longer found anywhere else in the world. Moreover, New Jersey represents the global stronghold for swamp pink, harboring more than 70 percent of the world's population of this species.

## Why Care About Endangered Species Conservation?

New Jerseyans should protect the State's diversity of native animals and plants, because a healthy environment provides for a healthy human population, which in turn sustains a healthy economy. Imagine the impact of a polluted Jersey shore on the State's economy. According to the Coastal Alliance, revenues generated from the New Jersey coastline represent 51 percent of the State's total economy.

Even more important than direct economic value is each living organism's unique reservoir of genetic material. This genetic material cannot be retrieved or duplicated if lost and may hold unknown economic benefits for humankind in medicine, agriculture, and industry. In addition, these organisms generate the air we breathe, clean the water we drink, and recycle nutrients in the soil to help grow the plants we eat.



Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)

Annette Scherer/USFWS



Bog Turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*)

Photo/Robert T. Zappalorti/©Natures



Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*)

Gene Nieminen/USFWS

## Development vs. the Endangered Species Act in New Jersey

Section 7 of the ESA helps protect listed species by requiring federal agencies to consult with the Service or National Marine Fisheries Service on federally funded or permitted projects where these species are present. Private individuals applying for federal permits may also become involved in this coordination process.

Section 7 consultations in New Jersey are extremely effective in assisting federal agencies in planning projects that avoid harm to listed species and help maintain a healthy environment. For example, from 1996 through 2001, the Service's New Jersey Field Office conducted 4,662 Section 7 consultations. The planning efforts involved with those consultations resulted in some projects being modified to be more environmentally sensitive, but the ESA *did not stop one project*. Maintaining a healthy environment and protecting declining species populations should not be equated with stopping development or large-scale job loss.



Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium americanum*)

Gene Nieminen/USFWS

**The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.**



Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*)

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